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BOOK REVIEWS AND NOTICES

A History of the Western Boundary of the Louisiana Purchase, 1819-1841. By Thomas Maitland Marshall, Ph. D. [University of California Publications in History, Volume II] (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1914. Pp. xiii, 266. \$2.00.)

This is a history of the diplomacy of the Louisiana-Texas boundary. The subject has been approached from various angles by numerous investigators, but this is the first consecutive survey covering the whole period from the emergence of the Texas question in United States history to the settlement of the boundary with the Republic of Texas in 1841. Three chapters review the boundary negotiations with Spain, closing with the treaty of 1819; and, despite the fact that Dr. Marshall is here following in the footsteps of Henry Adams, his treatment is quite the clearest and most detailed that we have. Seven chapters present the varied phases of our boundary relations with Mexico: that is, the negotiation of the unratified treaty of 1828; the efforts of Adams and Jackson to buy Texas; the activities of Colonel Anthony Butler, our unscrupulous chargé d'affaires in Mexico; the question of neutrality during the Texas revolution and the occupation of Nacogdoches by United States troops in the summer of 1836. The last two chapters trace the boundary relations between the United States and Texas—an aspect of the question that has been left heretofore almost untouched by historians. Thirty maps illustrate every diplomatic shift in the development of the boundary line.

In two paragraphs of the Preface the author indicates "some of the more important phases of the subject in which he has differed with accepted theory or in which he believes that he has added somewhat to the history of the subject. [1] He finds that Napoleon decided to sell Louisiana several months earlier than the date set by Henry Adams. [2] The conception of the size of Louisiana gradually developed in the mind of Jefferson; the conclusion which he reached became the basis of American diplomacy

for half a century; the evolution of this idea and its importance have not been fully appreciated. [3] The sale of Louisiana by France having been consummated, Spain carried out an effective plan for restricting the limits of the purchase; this has never received adequate treatment. [4] The reason for Wilkinson's betrayal of Burr and for entering into the Neutral Ground Treaty has been the subject of much discussion and various theories have been advanced; the truth of the matter seems to lie in the fact that Wilkinson sold his services to the Spanish government while he was stationed on the western frontier. [5] The activity of Spain in making a boundary investigation, which was carried on even during the Napoleonic occupation, has not previously received adequate notice. [6] Historians have usually accepted the view that the claim to Texas was given up in exchange for Florida. The writer believes that the purchase of Florida was a foregone conclusion from early in 1818, and thereafter Adams yielded the claim to Texas and advanced a claim to the Oregon country; it would perhaps be more correct then to say that Texas was given up in exchange for Spanish claims to the Oregon country.

"The writer disagrees fundamentally with the views of some historians regarding the purity of Andrew Jackson's motives concerning Texas. The operations of General Edmund P. Gaines on the Sabine frontier in 1836 have never before been examined critically. Lastly, the Sabine boundary question during the period of the Texas republic has heretofore been dismissed without comment."

These points are suggestive, but several of them seem to the reviewer to rest on insufficient evidence: It is always a safe assumption that Wilkinson sold his services to the Spanish government whenever he could induce it to buy them, but the anonymous letter (pages 30-31) from the *New York Spectator* of June 7, 1807, in Monette's Mississippi Valley hardly affords a conclusive explanation for Wilkinson's desertion of Burr. At best it seems to leave the question pretty much where it was before. Even granting its accuracy, why did Wilkinson now see the chance of greater profit in alliance with Spain than in pursuing his earlier plans with Burr? It is true, as Dr. Marshall shows (pages 58-59), that Adams tried to get the 41st instead of the 42d parallel for the boundary west of the mountains, and that the United

States in its negotiations with Great Britain in 1826-1827 and especially in 1845-1846 made a good deal of the title acquired from Spain; but it seems likely that Adams would have confided to his faithful diary or divulged in his later speeches any deliberate purpose to exchange our claims to Texas for those of Spain to Oregon. Dr. Marshall has examined with minute and critical care all the printed sources on President Jackson's relations to the Texas question. Some of this evidence is susceptible of interpretation unfavorable to Jackson's straightforwardness and uprightness, but in the opinion of the reviewer such interpretation requires somewhat forcible wrenching of the plain significance of the documents and often ignores the exigencies under which they were written. One or two illustrations of this must suffice.

Remembering that General Gaines on the Sabine frontier was from four to five weeks distant from Washington, it seems obvious that a large measure of discretion had to be allowed him—especially as the author shows, more clearly than has ever been done before, the real danger of Indian disturbances in that quarter. This being the case, it is difficult to find in Cass's instructions, quoted on pages 158-159, 164-165, and 167, the double meaning that Dr. Marshall perceives. It is perfectly true that Gaines had very little discretion, but he was the Commander of the Southwestern Division of the United States army, and his employment on the Sabine in 1836 does not prove the administration insincere in its protestations of neutrality. Moreover, Gaines himself does not seem to have held at this time that settled determination which the author suspects to use his position to promote war with Mexico and assist the Texans. His meagre correspondence in the Adjutant General's office of the War Department at Washington shows that during the whole summer he was momentarily expecting to ask for a leave of absence and turn over the command to some one else. Too much weight seems to the reviewer to be given David Lee Child's irresponsible statement of President Jackson's intention to seize Texas (page 115); a cautious person will not be disposed to contend that a declaration of war was "beyond the range of possibility . . . if Santa Anna had continued his victorious career in Texas" (page 199); but he would risk little in asserting that the book presents slight evidence that it was within the range of *probability*; and the order to Gaines to

enforce neutrality (page 201) would not be so amusing if we were told—as was the case,—that similar orders went to all officers, civil and military, wherever a violation of the law of April 20, 1818, seemed possible. Motives of governments, as of individuals, are rarely simple enough or transparent enough to permit dogmatic analysis, and it seems to the reviewer that Dr. Marshall may have failed at times to consider all the complex factors in the situation. The value of the book does not depend, however, on these matters of opinion. It is a comprehensive and scholarly survey of the whole Sabine boundary question, based on an independent evaluation of all the scattered printed sources. The work is well done and will prove alike useful to the general reader interested in the history of the Southwest and to college classes studying that section.

EUGENE C. BARKER.

The Political Shame of Mexico. By Edward I. Bell, formerly editor and publisher of "La Prensa" and "The Daily Mexican" of Mexico City. (New York: McBride, Nast & Company, 1914. 422 p. \$2.00.)¹

The author was editor of a daily newspaper, head of a considerable news-gathering system, and acquainted with most of the important figures of Mexico. His opportunities to know and intelligently interpret the past four years of troubled Mexican history have been unusual. His most important material was gotten "not from books, for none contain it, but from men." José Ives Limantour read proof of part of the book and discussed freely, but not enlighteningly, certain phases of the Diaz collapse; and the author has evidently been in close touch with some authorized spokesman of the Madero clan. The book is thoughtful, pungently written, suggestive, and fascinating. Mr. Bell knows his Mexico, where "things are never what they seem," and his picture is atmospherically correct. As a contemporary interpretation of an immensely intricate subject by a well-informed and evidently fair-minded observer who has made an effort to check his observations, the book ought to be a useful guide to future investigations.

¹This review is reprinted from *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review* of June, 1915.